Bridgwater March 8th 1854

My dear Sir,

From a postscript of a letter which Miss Estlin kindly sent me, I saw that my last letter had been received by you. No doubt, you have so much on your hands, that you have been unable to write to me as yet. You need not be afraid of stopping all communication by doing so, as I shall write to you from time unless you positively interdict letters. — Since I wrote to you we have had two regular working meetings and two committee meetings of our Socy. The first of the working meetings was held under very unfavourable circumstances; the snow falling very thick, and our only meeting place, being a room with a bad reputation as draughty in the extreme. I was however very much pleased by finding that notwithstanding the very inclement weather a good many ladies had ventured out. You can easily imagine that there was no lack of matter to keep up the interest for two hours. To those interested in the cause, there is interest in every thing; they who have not worked much upon the matter hardly know, how every event can be made a text for antislavery meditation & discussion.

Last Thursday we had our third working meeting. I am glad to say that the numbers were good: some new faces I saw, and for some that were away I knew there was good reason. I began the meeting by giving a brief sketch of what had happened of interest in the A.S. world since we had met in January. I do not know how it is, but I think there have been for 2 months so full of valuable events. On your side of the Atlantic there is John Mitchel's grand somersault, and the Nebraska affair; your Mass. Annual Meeting, and those very excellent lectures delivered at New York: while here we have had the Manchester Schism, with the edifying revelation of Mr. Hemming's principles & a nice little controversy between the Advocate & the Slave on the question of Infidelity. Besides this I think there has been a growing interest in American affairs, at least I find more people now who talk about the States than I used to do, and no conversation about the States ever arises without a reference to Slavery.

We were very much rejoiced to hear that Parker Pillsbury was going to visit us Englishmen: & you can imagine how grieved we are to find him suffering so badly. We had hoped to see him amongst us last Thursday, instead of that we find him seriously ill at Bristol. We passed a resolution at our meeting, addressed to him: (I enclose a copy of it) in order that he might feel, that though at a distance from his old acquaintances & friends, he is still not distant from the hearts of those, who truly are interested in the wellbeing of their fellow creatures over all the earth. The greatest part of the time on Thursday was spent in discussing the Free Labour Question. We determined to have a depôt of Free Labour Goods in Bridgwater, and expressed our hope that all friends of Emancipation would give to Free labour goods the decided preference when possible. I should be glad to have the opinions of some of you veterans on this question; it excites great interest here amongst the religious portion of the community especially. It appears to me to be a very useful auxiliary to the A.S. cause; but it ought never to be put forward as the great means of attack, as far as I see, because it is after all only an indirect means of getting at the Slaveholders.

We were very much interested by Miss Weston's report of the Bazaar from which I selected copious extracts for our meeting. The success you met with, is very cheering. I think I am quite safe in promising a better contribution from Bridgwater this year than we sent last time. Our efforts are more combined now, In a letter which a friend of mine was reading to me yesterday from Miss Julia Griffiths about the Rochester Bazaar, I see that Manchester Prints sell well there. — Do they go well with you? & if they do, about what quality of prints are best. I have a brother in the Manchester trade, & could obtain the goods cheap & well if I knew what quality to order.

From the above allusion to Miss Griffiths you will see that we are whole friends of the A. A. S. Society here. There are one or two among us, who learned their Anti Slavery doctrines from Douglass & who have followed him up to the present time. We avoid therefore as much as possible entering into the discussions about him, being satisfied, with the Society as a body being pledged to the support of the only true Abolition Socty in America. By degrees I hope we shall be able to convert the few outsiders, but that must at the best be a work of time. — Mr. Chamerovzow wanted us to unite with Broad Street, but I am happy to say I succeeded in preventing that catastrophe: we had much better have many independant Societies over the country working together whenever they agree, and acting independantly when they do not. We have all the advantages of union by this means, and need not every now & then ~~have~~ send forth protests as we should be obliged to do, were we mere Auxiliaries. — I am sorry that the London Society does not keep up to its high promise, when Mr. Chamerovzow took the Secretaryship. — I must say that his conduct of late, in the Manchester affair, for instance, does not seem to me quite open and consistent: there is too much managing about it for my taste. It is however only fair to say that Mr. R. D. Webb thinks him quite trustworthy, and few persons are better able to judge than he is. —

I do not know whether I enquired in my last letter, if you knew anything about the "National Demokrat" a German paper

published in Washington.– I should be glad to know something of it, is
it a Journal to be relied on, and to be recommended as giving
good and fair intelligence on Anti Slavery movements? What is
~~taught~~ general opinion with respect to the New York Daily Times
I suppose it is as far if not farther advanced than most papers
except the Tribune? We know too little here with respect to the
position of the American Press, and are often misled by not knowing
what the papers are: a most useful article for us, would be a
sketch of American parties, & an enumeration of the leading
journals of each party; What can poor ignorant John Bull
know, about hards or softs, or Silver Grays or Barnburners:
You have no idea how difficult it is for us to steer our way through
the mazes of your various parties. We are quite in the dark
about most of these technical terms.–

I fear I am trespassing upon your time by my desultory
chat, but I think you will see from my letter, in what direction
we Bridgwater folks want enlightening. If you can render some
information, we shall receive it very gladly I can assure you.
If you publish any documents or books of interest in the Anti
Slavery Cause, and they do not amount to any thing very out of
the way in price, it would greatly oblige our Socy if you would
without further orders to send one copy of all your publications we
would remit by Mr R. D. Webb whatever the expense may
be.–

And now my dear Sir, accept in conclusion, in my own name
and in the name of the Society I represent, my warmest sympathy
in all your endeavours for that great cause, for which you have
so long been labouring & believe me

Yours ever most faithfully

S Alfred Steinthal

MS.B.1.6 v.5, p.15

At a meeting of the Bridgwater Auxiliary Anti Slavery Socty held at the Grand Jury Room on Thursday Evening March 2nd: it was resolved unanimously:

"That this Society being deeply impressed with the many Sacrifices, which all consistent Abolitionists must make in the United States of America, would have been glad to have welcomed Mr Parker Pillsbury amongst them this evening, coming as he does, recommended by 15 years of active usefulness in the Anti Slavery Cause, and deeply regretting the cause of his absence this evening desire to express their hope, that he may soon be restored to health and strength; and long be spared, in the hands of Providence to be a source of hope to the downtrodden and the oppressed

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ms. B.1.6 v.5.p.15

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Recd Mar. 29.

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